

"nests" while six more birds circled the rock or flew several hundred yards out to sea. The next day the rock was visited by M.T., who found four birds on nests while four others circled in the air above the rock.

We were surprised to notice how forbearing one of the four sitting birds was, for it allowed us to handle it. Each of the others, however, raucously guarded their single egg if the 2 ft. safety limit was encroached on.

The egg of the tame bird was marked with what seemed to be the green juice of the pigface and lay next to the bird in the heat of the sun. The other birds, however, seemed to be taking more care of their eggs.

—TED WATTS, Carmel, and MICHAEL TARBOTTOM, Victoria Park.

[Previous references to the nesting of this species in the Sugarloaf Rock area were made in the *W. Aust. Nat.*, 9: 120 and 171, though the present report is the first of actual nesting on the Sugarloaf itself.—Ed.]

Aboriginal Artefacts at Rottneest Island.—As far as is known Aborigines did not visit Rottneest Island prior to white settlement, but Aboriginal prisoners were held there between 1838 and 1903 and artefacts made by them occur on the island.

In April, 1958, I found a number of bottle-glass spearheads and later collections were made in January, 1959, and Easter, 1963. They were all from one restricted locality and my attention was first attracted by the presence of large quantities of broken glass, from old-fashioned bottles, in concentrations over an area of about half an acre on top, and on the western slopes,

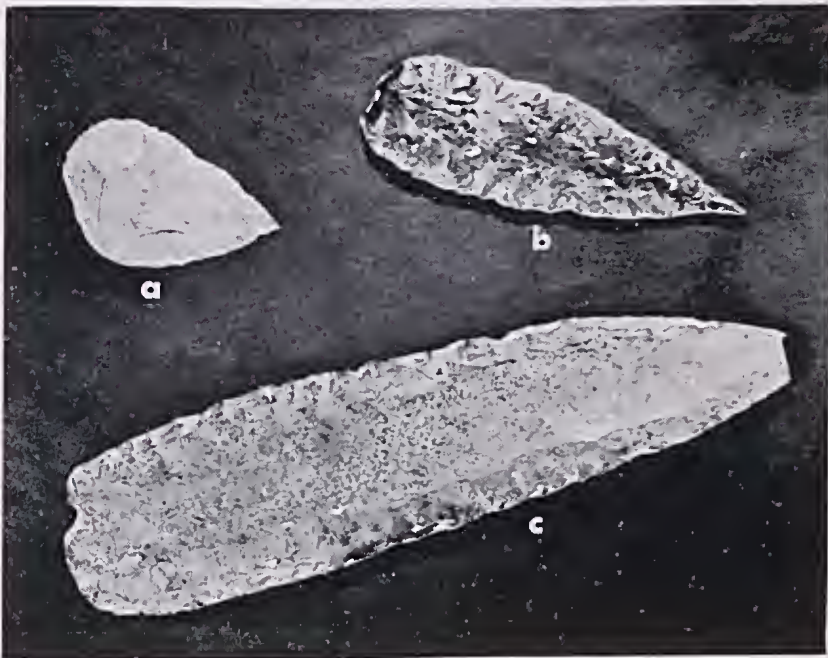


Fig. 1.—a and b, biface points; c, partly completed shovel-nosed spearhead.

—Photo M. Beek.

of what is locally called Peacock Hill. This hill, well shaded by tea-tree, is the northernmost part of a ridge north of Garden Lake and near the south-western corner of the camping area at the Settlement.

Closer inspection showed that many of the pieces of glass had been artificially worked and though most were in various preliminary stages of manufacture, or had been discarded during the process, I found several pieces which appeared to have been completed. There were two broken and a third perfect classic examples of Kimberley biface points, the last just under 3 in. in length and 1 in. wide (Fig. 1b). There was another completed short broader biface point (1 5/8 x 1 in.) which Mr. W. H. Butler, to whom I showed the material, said was of a type more commonly found in the King Leopold Range (Fig. 1a). These are hunting spearheads but Mr. Butler recognised in the collection more lethal material. These were a partly trimmed blank for a shovel-nosed spearhead, 5 1/2 in. long and 1 1/2 in. wide (Fig. 1c) and the butt of another one. The artefacts were scattered on the surface or buried in the top couple of inches of sand.

Prisoners from the Kimberley Division would have been sent to the island only after 1880 and it seems likely that they were responsible for most, if not all, of the glass artefacts. Stone artefacts could not be made as no igneous rock outcrops are on the island, the country rock being a dunc limestone (aeolianite).

It might be asked why were such apparently lethal weapons allowed to be made by the prisoners? Some quotations from contemporary visitors provide an explanation:—

During the surveys of H.M.S. *Beagle* the island was visited several times by J. Lort Stokes and under date March 25, 1840, he recorded (*Discoveries in Australia*, 1846, vol. 2, p. 130): "The native prisoners . . . are allowed to have a common kind of spear, though without any throwing stick; and sometimes receive permission to go to the west end of the island to endeavour to kill wallaby, which are there rather numerous." Writing in 1884 Lady Broome, wife of the Governor, Sir Frederick Napier Broome, gave a lively account of the life of the prisoners on Rottnest at the time: "Every Sunday the prisoners are allowed to roam about at perfect liberty all over the island to get their own food, so that they may not entirely forget how to provide for themselves. They have their breakfast before they go out and their supper after they come in; but they delight in finding dinner for themselves. First of all, they fashion small spears and fishing lines, and go and fish, and they hunt for all the snakes on the island, and lizards, and every other native delicacy" (Lady Broome, *Letters to Guy*, 1885, p. 169; Alexandra Hasluck, *Remembered with Affection*, 1963, p. 110).

A fairly detailed account of the native prison system is given by W. Somerville in his *Rottnest Island—Its History and Legends* (1948), but there is little that is relevant to the present subject. However, on p. 79 he quotes from the reminiscences of L. C. Timperley, son of W. H. Timperley, who was superintendent of the island between 1883 and 1890. "No weapons which could be used for offensive purposes were allowed inside the gaol, with the exception of kylie (boomerangs). These and small spears with blunt ends were made in plenty by the natives . . . for corroborees . . . and sham fights." Perhaps the glass spearheads were an illicit activity.

—P. E. SERVenty, Nedlands.